



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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IDC General Assembly - Hutchison Discussions – Branch Industrial/Legal Officer - Argentina's Merchant Navy - Jailed Shipyard Workers - Qld Member Wins Trainee Award – Vale Whiskey

IDC General Assembly 2016

THE INTERNATIONAL DOCKWORKER'S Council (IDC) General Assembly held in Miami, Florida on September 26 – 29 was one of the finest trade union gatherings I have been fortunate enough to attend.



MUA Delegation with Jordi Aragunde at the IDC General Assembly

The Queensland delegation of Bob Carnegie – Branch Secretary, Paul Petersen – Branch Organiser, Aaron Johnston – DP World, Paul Williams – Patricks, Joseph Tipene – Hutchison, Bill Ross – Maintenance Rep, as previously stated, all did their Branch and respective workplaces proud. All delegates attended every session. They were engaged and this has played no small part in cementing the Queensland Branch of the MUA's position in the IDC.



refreshingly different. The IDC now represents 97,000 dockworkers around the world and runs on a bureaucracy of just two. For the first time the IDC have a full time coordinator, Jordi Aragunde, a 35 year old docker from the

Not all Trade Unions but sadly most, overtime, have a tendency to turn into bureaucratic organisations becoming more remote from the rank and file.

The IDC is so

fighting city of Barcelona. Jordi's unparalleled capacity for hard work, his love of the working class and dockworkers in particular, is just infectious.

Some members might ask why is the IDC so important? What all this internationalism about? A little more than 50 years ago with the advent of containerisation – the world of trade, transport and logistics was changed forever. The world we live in is totally tied up in the 20 foot or 40 foot tin can we call a container. Ninety percent (90%) of everything in homes, what we wear and what we have are carried by containers.

This give wharfies (dockers, longshoremen) a unique position in the supply chain and one, in my opinion, we have not readily or successfully used the leverage we are capable of to defend and embrace wharfies' conditions, not just in Australia but around the world.

Imagine if a wharfie is sacked unjustly in a Brisbane terminal and longshoremen and dockers around the world took some action in support. "Lifting the foot" in LA, protesting in Le Harve - France, arguing in Aalborg – Denmark, defending each other everywhere. This is what the IDC is about. Looking out for each and everyone of us!



A new zone, the Oceania/Asia zone was elected at the General Assembly. Bob Carnegie and Paul McAleer – Sydney Branch Secretary, of the MUA were elected as Joint Zone Coordinators in an effort to bring some form of union structure and support to the dock workers in Asia and Oceania who need our support.

This is purely an honorary position both Paul and I have taken on to fight for the rights of working class people and to challenge some of the transport giants in, what is now the centre of the world's manufacturing, Asia.

Our Branchs' relationship with the ITF will remain strong as we develop close ties with the IDC. Both organisations have a great deal to offer with different structures and different strengths. This, I believe, is the mature approach to the matter.

Hutchison Discussions

THIS WEEK THE Branch has been heavily involved in discussions with the Hutchison workforce and management about the engagement of casuals and former employees made redundant by the company after the infamous 'Sacked by Text' dispute of 2015 and the subsequent 136 day long community protest.

During these discussions it has been decided by ourselves in the Queensland and Sydney Branch that we would deal with Hutchison in a committed, united way, with both Branches adopting common positions so we go into talks with this Stevedoring behemoth as a totally united body. This has already paid dividends. We have been successful with the great, great majority having been rehired out of those made forcibly redundant by Hutchison after August 6 last year.

Both the Queensland and Sydney Branches are extremely proud of this development. The Queensland Branch would like to go on record to thank both Warren Smith and Paddy Crumlin for their efforts in getting this across the line.

Hutchison have put on several new hire casuals, the great majority, as agreed are to come from our ranks, with several displaced seafaring members now given the opportunity to hopefully develop a new career as wharfies. HOWEVER, we have seen Hutchison management in some respects starting to back out of agreed positions and to carry on like they did pre August 2015.

As the Queensland Branch Secretary I would strongly advise Hutchison management that we can either have a cooperative, mature approach to labour relations in the Brisbane Terminal or we can have an adversarial approach. The choice is management's.

I'm writing this article at 0330 on Thursday morning and in the end I'm quite philosophical about this as is Paul Petersen our Branch Organiser who looks after Hutchison along with myself.

Both Paul Petersen and I quite gladly work long hours in our respective roles in fighting for the rights of our members and the working class generally. If some of that time has to be spent in dealing with an employer who disrespects our MUA shirt and therefore disrespects every member of our union; well, we will deal with it.

When we write emails we expect the courtesy of a reply. When we attempt to go on site we don't want to be interrogated by security and kept at the gate like we are a bad smell. We expect that our role in looking after our members and delegates is one that is respected. We are in the FWC in Sydney on Friday where senior Hutchison management from Hong Kong will be present and we will be putting our concerns very candidly and robustly forward.

Appointment of a Branch Industrial Legal Officer

AFTER VERY INTENSE discussions, the Queensland Branch leadership has convinced our National Secretary of the necessity of having employed, out of our Brisbane office, a highly qualified Legal/Industrial Officer.

I am very proud of this appointment as it was one of my election planks in gaining the Branch Secretary's position.

The employment of a Legal/Industrial Officer will add further professionalism to the work we do and will also save the Union a small fortune in legals as much legal work has been previously outbound by the Branch.

The Branch would like to extend its thanks to the Deputy National Secretary, Will Tracey who worked arduously through this process with myself. Will's understanding of the current necessity of this Branch having a Legal/Industrial Officer was a vital necessity in getting our professional up.

As with most things, they are full of compromise and part of that compromise is our Legal/Industrial Officer will have duties in the Northern Territory from time to time but he/she will be predominantly based in Brisbane.

Argentina's Merchant Navy Eyes a Quiet Revival

By Guillermo Háskel – sourced from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/222419/argentina's-merchant-navy-eyes-a-quiet-revival>

Government Officials, Businesses, Unions Adopting Less Ambitious Approach to Refloat Sector

WITH A NEW administration in command, officials, legislators, businesses and unions are once again seeking to refloat Argentina's dismantled Merchant Navy and shipbuilding industry, albeit this time via less ambitious initiatives than the ones supported by the previous government.

All parties involved are now focusing primarily on river and domestic navigation, deferring dreams of recovering a seafaring merchant fleet such as the one the country boasted a half century ago.

Initiatives are being cautiously supported by the administration of President Mauricio Macri, who took office last December after 12 years of the successive Peronist presidencies of the late Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and his widow Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015). The aim is for Argentina — which accounts for 11 percent of the global grain trade — to recover at least a humble piece of the freight cake that it lost when president Carlos Menem dismantled the national fleet which had received a strong boost from three-term president Juan Domingo Perón.

The new drive comes after a Kirchnerite deputy presented an ambitious bill just two years before Fernández de Kirchner was due to leave power. Her administration backed it, although some sources say with not enough enthusiasm. In the end, the bill stalled in Congress.

Tripartite Dialogue

Now the Macri government is leading tripartite talks with businesses and unions to re-establish a merchant fleet, according to Under-Secretary for Ports and Navigable Ways Jorge Metz, who reports to Transport Minister Guillermo Dietrich.

The prevailing mood, however, is of prudence, in sharp contrast with some grandiloquent arguments of two years ago. The parties involved expressed their views last week, during the Admiral Storni 2016 Seminar held at the Defence Ministry and sponsored by the Argentine Naval League NGO. Naval League Vice-President Fernando Morales said that one of the seminar's aims was to create maritime and riverside awareness in a country that has nearly 5,000 kilometres of coastline and owns half of the 3,400-kilometre Paraguay-Paraná river waterway it shares with Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. An example of the existing lack of awareness was reflected in the name of the Blue Pampa Atlantic Ocean

research programme launched by the government in 2014, he said. "It is paradoxical that we should resort to a land parallel to describe the sea."

Lost Freight

Argentina is losing billions of dollars a year in export and import freight. But estimations of the loss vary widely from US\$3 billion to US\$6 billion, and even US\$7 billion.

Addressing the seminar, Metz said: "We have been working for years on a plan to re-establish a competitive merchant navy and to solve symmetries. One of the leading challenges we face is the lack of an Argentine-flagged fleet. The freight business is not in our hands but in international hands. We are not competitive."

Lucas Aparicio, the Transport Ministry's labour relations coordinator, said that Argentina's merchant fleet was once the fifth largest in the world.

However, by the reckoning of the British Chamber of Shipping's 1965/66 report, which took into consideration lower tonnage vessels, Argentina actually ranked 19th.

Aparicio said that after once controlling 70 percent of the LA Plata Hidrovía basin trade, Argentina currently does not even have five percent. "We want to boost the Hidrovía fleet to transport an expected strong increase in agricultural production. But every party involved must make a patriotic effort. We have found the sector in a deep state of decay."

The Hidrovía is now overwhelmingly controlled by Paraguay.

Kirchner's Decree Spirit

Mariano Gendra Gigena is an adviser to Renewal Front leader Sergio Massa but made it clear that he was addressing the seminar as a member of the MUNA shipping table which is drawing proposals for the sector. He said that in the face of the lack of a definitive legislation, the sector is still regulated by Decree 1010 issued by Néstor Kirchner in 2004 which was initially expected to be in force for just two years. He said that in the face of the lack of a definitive legislation, the sector is still regulated by Decree 1010 issued by Néstor Kirchner in 2004 which was initially expected to be in force for just two years. He said that MUNA's proposal follows the spirit of Decree 1010 but envisages expanding benefits for ship-owners, shipyards and workshops, including tax breaks, and the creation of a project fund.



Work is carried out on the crank of the Juana Azurduy, one of the two oil tankers commissioned by Venezuela's state-run oil company PDVSA, at the Buenos Aires Province state-run Astillero Río Santiago shipyard

It is also seeking to offset the advantages favouring Paraguay. Marcela Passo, the deputy chairman of the Lower House's Maritime Interests Committee, said that the Renewal Front, to which she belongs, is proposing a US\$250-million annual budget for the sector. There are several other related

bills under consideration in Congress.

Unions

Horacio Domínguez, chairman of the Chief Engineers and Engineer Officers Union, said: "The tripartite talks are crucial. However, we also have to face reality. We are the world's breadbasket but we don't have a single grain carrier."

The international freight sector has undergone a "Copernican change," mostly since the end of World War II, he said.

"As the US needed ships to transport its cargo, it invented a country in Africa, Liberia, with its rotating dictatorships. It was just interested in a flag and this allowed it to develop not just a competitive Merchant Navy, but a unique one, as it had tax and labour regulations different from the US' own.

"That was when the seafaring merchant navy was born. Today, 99.9 percent of sea cargo is done by ships hoisting flags of convenience such as those of Panama or Bermudas. You will never see sea-faring vessels hoisting the flags of Britain, Germany, France or Italy, save, of course, for inland rivers. And guess which is one of the leading flags of convenience hoisted on super-tankers serving the former Soviet Union? That of Paraguay. They have low taxes and their wages are practically slave labour."

He went on to say: "There is a lot of talk about a merchant navy, but, of what kind? Domestically there are no doubts. We don't have to compete against anyone. Our crude carriers go to Comodoro Rivadavia, and bring the fuel from terminals and refineries. Nor do tug-boats compete with anyone. They work in a pool, practically all of them doing the same task.

"But there is a tremendous challenge in the Hidrovía. Moving to Paraguay is good business. About 60 percent of ship-owners using the Paraguayan flag are actually from Argentina. We have to defend the Hidrovía, become competitive and work on national and regional cabotage. We have already taken steps in that direction with a mix of Argentine legislation and ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) accords. And we have jobs for our people."

He added: "Lots of sailors worldwide have been abandoned by groups which use them and then discard them and hire cheap manpower from poorer countries and countries at war. This is the way these monopolies work. Maersk, MSC, Evergreen, Hamburg ... and are we going out to fight against them? Of course all this about the fatherland is good. We have to defend our interests fiercely but let's not think about creating a sea-faring merchant navy under these conditions." The seminar will meet again on October 7, in Mar del Plata, and for third and final time on October 21, again at the Defence Ministry.

Jailed Shipyard Workers in Alexandria Need Our Help

IN LATE MAY this year, workers at the shipyard docks in Alexandria, Egypt organized a peaceful protest. Company management had refused to negotiate with them and rejected their demands.

Following their protest, the workers were summoned by the military prosecution for interrogation. Fifteen workers presented themselves voluntarily and were surprised when they were all apprehended (except for one female worker who was released on bail). A warrant was issued against the remaining eleven workers.

Today, the workers remain in jail as they await sentencing. Those jailed workers and their families have no incomes, while the other workers are on the run and could be jailed at any time.

The Centre for Trade Union and Worker Services (CTUWS) has asked for our help to publicize this gross violation of human rights. Together we've launched an online campaign demanding the release of the jailed workers.

Please show your support:

<http://www.labourstart.org/go/alexandria>

Please share this message with your friends, family and fellow union members.

Queensland Branch Member Wins WA Trainee of the Year Award

THE WA TRAINING Awards recognise and reward outstanding achievements of apprentices, trainees and vocational students as well as the contribution to training made by trainers, training organisations and employers.

I was nominated as Trainee of the Year by my employer, METL, which required me to complete an online application form outlining my achievements throughout the duration of my traineeship.

There are 13 categories in the WA Training Awards, eight individual categories and five organisation categories. All applications were assessed by our industry's training council and then by a category judging panel. Eight semi-finalists were shortlisted for each category and required to participate in an interview with the judging panel for our chosen category.



Queensland Branch Member, Blake Sayer receiving the Trainee of the Year Award

Following the interview, I received notification in early August from the Department of Training and Workforce Development that I had been selected as a finalist for the Trainee of the Year Award category along with two other candidates, with one of the other two also being a METL trainee, Nathan Bartlett. All

finalists attended the 2016 WA Training Awards Presentation Dinner on Friday 23 September 2016 held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Although I'm a Queenslander, I was selected as winner of WA Trainee of the Year 2016 having completed the college component of my training at Challenger TAFE in Fremantle. I was awarded a \$5,000 study grant from my category sponsor, The Australian Medical Association of Western Australia. As a winner of the WA Training Awards, I will be representing WA and METL at the Australian Training Awards in Darwin on 17 November 2016 where winners from each State and Territory will compete at the National level. The Awards continue to put our State's top achievers in the spotlight.

It was a great experience to shed some light on the Maritime Industry and our challenges. The panel were quite intrigued about what we do and average people know very little about what our jobs entail.

As a trainee, you are presented with an insight of what group training really offers and how much of a kick start it is in your career. You can learn valuable skills and knowledge to create a bright future for yourself, plus it will open up other avenues for you that you might want to pursue later in life. During my time as a trainee, I worked on the RTM Wakmatha, Aurora Australis for two voyages, RTM Twarra and the Portland. The crew were really great. Since completing my traineeship, I have been attending the Branch meetings learning a lot about the industry from the members.

I am proud to represent METL, the MUA and my host employers ASP and P&O in our industry as a Group Training Ambassador and a State winner. I look forward to future challenges that lay ahead.

I would like to take this time to thank my employer METL for their ongoing support for the duration of my traineeship as well as after completing my traineeship. I couldn't have done this without them.

Blake Sayer Queensland Branch Member

Queensland Branch Picnic

The annual MUA Queensland Branch family picnic day is on again this year on Melbourne Cup Day, Tuesday 1 November 2016. This a great day for members and their family to come along and enjoy a delicious barbeque lunch, running races for the kids and adults, rides, pools and slides. It is held at The Plantation, 1204 New Cleveland Road, Gumdale with a start time of 10.00am. Please come along.

Vale Comrade Whiskey

Our four-legged comrade, Whiskey, from the MUA office passed away on Saturday 1 October aged 16 years.

Whiskey first came to the office around a year ago when he was sick and Carol asked if she could bring him in for a few days.



Bob's reply was "we wouldn't be much of a Union if we didn't look after our sick comrades, two legs or four". Since then Whiskey had become a permanent fixture at the office and

members would say hello when they were in the office. Whiskey will be sorely missed by the office staff and particularly his owner Carol and Albert (Bob's dog).



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